

WORKFORCE OBSERVATIONS FOR NORTHWEST WISCONSIN COUNTIES

NOVEMBER 2003



State of Wisconsin
Department of Workforce Development

Second notice !

Only two more issues of the Workforce Observations will be mailed to readers. Beginning with the January issue, the publication will only be available electronically. You can receive electronic notification (email) of new issues by registering your address at: http://www.dwd.state.wi.us/lmi/wda/wo_pubs.htm.

Electronic issues are available much sooner than mailed versions, roughly the third week of the month.

Unemployment rates decline in October

The unemployment rate for the ten-county area of Northwest Wisconsin declined in October to 4.5 percent. According to the Department of Workforce Development the current rate for northwest region declined in October from 4.6 percent in September, but is higher than the 4.3 percent unemployment rate of last October. The reduction from September followed state and national trends.

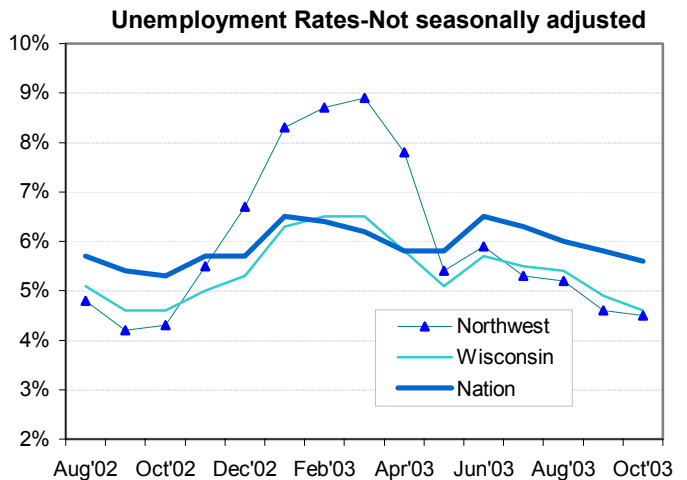
The Wisconsin unadjusted unemployment rate in October of 4.6 percent was down from 4.9 percent in September but was the same as one year ago. Nationwide, the unemployment rate dropped from 5.8 percent in September to 5.6 percent in October but was higher than the 5.3 percent rate of last October.

Six counties in Northwest Wisconsin had lower unemployment rates in October, as did 59 of the state's 72 counties. Two northwest counties posted no change in unemployment and two had higher unemployment rates.

The October changes in the local labor force reflected seasonal swings that are both unique to the employment picture in the northwest and some that are common throughout the state. Whether unique or shared the effects on the local labor force can be significant.

Most of the counties in the state reported employ-

ment gains in government in September and October as schools recalled workers. Because of late payroll reporting these increases appeared in October. Many counties in the state also reported a drop in tourism related employment in October, but those reductions are more significant in some northwest counties; and colder temperatures bring an end to most road con-



	Aug'02	Sep'02	Oct'02	Aug'03	Sep'03	Oct'03
Northwest	4.8%	4.2%	4.3%	5.2%	4.6%	4.5%
Wisconsin	5.1%	4.6%	4.6%	5.4%	4.9%	4.6%
Nation	5.7%	5.4%	5.3%	6.0%	5.8%	5.6%

Civilian Labor Force Estimates for Northwest Wisconsin counties: Current month - October 2003

	Ashland			Bayfield			Burnett			Douglas			Iron		
	Oct '03	Sep '03	Oct '02	Oct '03	Sep '03	Oct '02	Oct '03	Sep '03	Oct '02	Oct '03	Sep '03	Oct '02	Oct '03	Sep '03	Oct '02
Civilian labor force	8,785	8,795	8,475	7,895	7,920	7,609	7,980	8,116	7,630	23,326	23,275	22,727	3,329	3,344	3,251
Employed	8,269	8,299	7,984	7,561	7,587	7,300	7,710	7,834	7,313	22,214	22,151	21,855	3,159	3,147	3,055
Unemployed	516	496	491	334	333	309	270	282	317	1,112	1,124	872	170	197	196
% unemployed	5.9	5.6	5.8	4.2	4.2	4.1	3.4	3.5	4.2	4.8	4.8	3.8	5.1	5.9	6.0

	Price			Rusk			Sawyer			Taylor			Washburn		
	Oct '03	Sep '03	Oct '02	Oct '03	Sep '03	Oct '02	Oct '03	Sep '03	Oct '02	Oct '03	Sep '03	Oct '02	Oct '03	Sep '03	Oct '02
Civilian labor force	7,572	7,381	7,065	7,272	7,154	7,114	10,602	10,720	10,707	11,215	11,035	10,692	8,215	8,197	7,911
Employed	7,241	7,019	6,770	6,948	6,816	6,763	10,194	10,276	10,311	10,795	10,617	10,330	7,763	7,753	7,535
Unemployed	331	362	295	324	338	351	408	444	396	420	418	362	452	444	376
% unemployed	4.4	4.9	4.2	4.5	4.7	4.9	3.8	4.1	3.7	3.7	3.8	3.4	5.5	5.4	4.8

* not seasonally adjusted

Industry Employment Estimates for Northwest Wisconsin: Current month - October 2003

(Employment in thousands)	Ashland			Bayfield			Burnett			Douglas			Iron		
	Oct '03	Sep '03	Oct '02	Oct '03	Sep '03	Oct '02	Oct '03	Sep '03	Oct '02	Oct '03	Sep '03	Oct '02	Oct '03	Sep '03	Oct '02
Total Nonfarm	9.1	9.1	9.3	4.4	4.4	4.1	5.2	5.3	5.0	18.9	18.7	18.4	2.3	2.3	2.3
Const/Min'g/Nat. Resources	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.3	1.1	1.0	1.0	0.3	0.3	0.3
Manufacturing	1.2	1.1	1.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.9	0.9	1.0	1.1	1.1	1.2	0.5	0.4	0.4
Trade	1.1	1.1	1.1	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.6	0.6	0.6	3.3	3.3	3.2	0.4	0.3	0.4
Transportation & Utilities	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	2.1	2.0	2.1	0.1	0.1	0.0
Financial Activities	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.1	0.1	0.1
Education & Health Services	1.9	1.9	1.8	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.6	0.6	0.6	1.8	1.7	1.8	0.3	0.3	0.3
Leisure & Hospitality	1.1	1.2	1.0	1.3	1.4	1.1	0.7	0.7	0.6	2.4	2.5	2.3	0.3	0.3	0.4
Info, Prof/Bus.Srv, Othr Srv.	0.6	0.6	0.7	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.3	3.4	3.4	3.0	0.1	0.1	0.1
Total Government	2.0	2.0	2.2	1.4	1.3	1.3	1.4	1.4	1.3	3.3	3.1	3.3	0.3	0.3	0.3

	Price			Rusk			Sawyer			Taylor			Washburn		
	Oct '03	Sep '03	Oct '02	Oct '03	Sep '03	Oct '02	Oct '03	Sep '03	Oct '02	Oct '03	Sep '03	Oct '02	Oct '03	Sep '03	Oct '02
Total Nonfarm	7.0	6.8	6.7	6.1	6.1	6.1	7.2	7.3	7.5	9.4	9.4	9.2	6.1	6.0	6.1
Const/Min'g/Nat. Resources	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.3
Manufacturing	2.8	2.5	2.6	2.1	2.1	2.1	0.6	0.6	0.6	2.8	2.8	2.8	1.0	1.0	1.0
Trade	0.7	0.7	0.8	0.6	0.6	0.6	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.4	1.4	1.4	0.9	0.9	0.9
Transportation & Utilities	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.2
Financial Activities	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.2
Education & Health Services	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.7	0.7	0.7	1.2	1.2	1.1	0.9	0.8	0.8
Leisure & Hospitality	0.4	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	1.2	1.4	1.4	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.7	0.8	0.7
Info, Prof/Bus.Srv, Othr Srv.	0.7	0.7	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.7	0.6	0.8	1.2	1.2	1.0	0.4	0.4	0.4
Total Government	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.4	1.3	1.3	1.9	1.8	2.0	1.1	1.0	1.1	1.4	1.3	1.4

Current month preliminary. Estimates based on March 2002 benchmark. Summing from unrounded numbers.

struction projects. Finally, the wreath making business impacts employment in some of the northwest counties more than in other counties in the state.

One more seasonal event that distinguishes the northwest counties occurs next month when local employers lay off workers during the deer hunt. That will end the run of the last four months in which the local unemployment rate was below both the state and national rates.

Because of these seasonal swings in jobs it is sometimes difficult to see if there are underlying changes in the local employment picture, especially on a monthly basis. Annual comparisons are more apt to reflect improvement, or deterioration, in employment; and, statewide 39 counties, including Iron, Burnett, and Rusk, reported lower unemployment rates over one year ago. In Burnett County the unemployment rate dropped from 4.2 percent one year ago to the current 3.4 percent rate. The unemployment rate in Iron County in October was 5.1 percent, down from 6.0 percent twelve months earlier while in Rusk the rate dropped to 4.5 percent from 4.9 percent one year ago.

Half the counties in the state had an unemployment rate lower than 4.3 percent, including four northwest counties. The unemployment rate in Bayfield County in October was 4.2 percent, in Sawyer County it was 3.8

percent, in Taylor it was 3.7 percent, and in Burnett, 3.4 percent. In addition to Iron and Rusk, four other counties had rates higher than 4.3 percent. They included Price with a 4.4 percent unemployment rate, Douglas with 4.8 percent unemployed, Washburn with 5.5 percent unemployed, and Ashland with a 5.9 percent unemployment rate in October.

Seasonal employment created 250 production jobs in October, primarily in Price County. There are over 400 wreath and garland assemblers in the county at the height of the season. However, the region's manufacturing employment is still 140 shy of the 13,200 jobs in last October.

The season's end of summer tourism was reflected in the loss of nearly 650 jobs from leisure and hospitality employers, especially in Bayfield, Douglas, and Sawyer counties. Compared with a year ago, however, there are over 300 more jobs with these employers. And, while government employment increased some 650 jobs in October it is down 130 jobs from a year ago.

Unemployment claims in the ten counties are still higher than a year ago. In mid-October 2,056 residents filed a claim for benefits, up slightly from 2,033 in mid-September and from 1,914 one year ago. The number of claims increases by mid-November to 2,592.

Look for the most current Labor Market Information at: WWW.DWD.STATE.WI.US/LMI

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